

MINUTES

For the meeting of Parish Council, held on Wednesday, 7th December 2022

Meeting Number 22.388

Note for information: Cherwell District Council – CDC, Oxfordshire County Council - OCC

Public Participation

There was nothing to note from the public.

22.388.1 To Receive: Apologies for non-attendance

Councillors Bohm (SD), Stafford Allen (RSA), Rosser (CR) and Miller (JM) were all present.

Councillors Davis and Mullane sent their apologies, which were accepted.

Councillor Nigel Simpson (Oxfordshire County Council) and Councillor Angus Patrick (Cherwell District Council) were also in attendance for the meeting. Councillor Coton (Cherwell District Council) also sent her apologies.

3 members of the public were in attendance for the majority of the meeting, including Roger Evans (RE).

22.388.2 To Receive: Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

22.388.3 To Receive & Approve: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd November 2022 (DB)

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd November 2022 were discussed with only a minor spelling amendment on P3.

The resolution to approve the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd November 2022 was then proposed by DB and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to present minutes to Chair to sign, then file and upload to the web.

A Councillor queried whether the policy had changed at CDC over notifying adjacent residents of nearby planning applications as they had failed to be notified on a recent application.

Councillor Patrick offered to take this item away and investigate further with CDC planning team.

22.388.4 For Information: Chairs Comment (DB)

DB provided an update on three positive news items:

1. **CPRE** reported a recent victory for the countryside in 4 key areas:
 - i. An abandoning of damaging, centralised mandatory housing targets that have led to needless, unaffordable and poorly designed greenfield developments, in favour of an advisory system that takes local character and need into account.
 - ii. An end to landbanking – the practice developers use to sit on land they have acquired permission for while it accrues in value.

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- iii. Stronger regulation of the short-term holiday lets market that's been crippling many rural communities.
- iv. Local authorities given greater powers to promote brownfield development.

2. Bicester Food Bank village collection undertaken by the Church, Village Hall and Parish Council – the December drive resulted in a fantastic 220.77kg of food being donated to the food bank plus toys for the children.

3. CDC Planning Enforcement

Planning enforcement workshop (organised by CDC Councillor Patrick) was held on 5th December 2022, key takeaway points included:

- Villagers hate retrospective planning permissions
- CDC Enforcement are working hard on communications and relationships: requested if people have complaints to please put them on a complaint form as they can then generate data on the issues
- Importance of listed buildings – enforcement are tightening up on the process but other concerns inside buildings also need to be raised
- Local enforcement plan being reviewed – offered for reading if anyone interested.

22.388.5 For Information: Clerk report (Clerk)

The clerks report to the Council was noted which confirmed the bank account balances and the standard payments from the Parish Council bank account for the clerk’s salary.

Confirmation was also provided that the independent financial checks for Q2 FY 2022-23 have been carried out by Councillor Stafford Allen and key documents have been signed and filed.

The clerk had a very productive meeting with our Highways Inspector, Chris Grain, on 3rd November 2022 and a number of items are being followed up.

A remote interim audit with our appointed internal auditor, Fair Account, is booked for Monday 9th January 2023 to cover the period 01/04/22 to 31/12/22. A number of key governance and financial documents will be checked and advice provided. A date will then be fixed for the end of year audit to be linked with the submission of the AGAR form.

Finally a huge thank you to Councillors Miller and Stafford Allen for fixing the fallen village gate just past Milestone Lane.

22.388.6 For Information: Oak Tree footpath update (DB/Roger Evans, RE)

RE confirmed that the replacement path at the top of North Lane is to be paid for and constructed by the developer.

OCC has confirmed there is funding to demolish the existing path but this will not be undertaken until mid-February onwards as the OCC direct works team is booked up.

Some key points to note:

1. Construction of the new path has still not started despite discussing this a few months ago and should therefore be queried with CDC enforcement.
2. Working drawings are reportedly not to be produced and the original drawings are to be worked from. There is concern over the contractor just making decisions on site. The village/Parish Council will need to be represented and monitor workings closely.
3. The Parish Council has agreed to retain the arborist consultant – Sylva Consultancy - who provided the report on the original path in 2021 in order to supervise the construction and demolition works and health of the oak tree.

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DB confirmed that the Parish Council will be vigilant and will insist that works are stopped if something is wrong. Julian Richardson from OCC is planning to be present on the site regularly.

22.388.7 For Information: Technology Advisory Group update

There was no further update on this topic whilst waiting for follow up information from Gigaclear.

22.388.8 For Information: Transport Advisory Group update (Graham Barnett, GB)

GB confirmed that the community vehicle has now been registered under the Parish Council's name and vehicle road tax obtained. 2/3 more volunteers have also offered to drive on occasion.

GB is in the process of obtaining insurance quotes and requested that someone on the Council also look at the quotes. GB will send across to JM and the clerk/finance advisory group for review.

Action: JM and clerk/finance advisory group to review insurance quotes for community vehicle.

GB has also attended sessions with Dave Harrison, OCC Transport Planner: the 250 bus service operator, Diamond, has terminated its contract and has given a 70 day notice on the 250 route.

OCC money is available for a demand responsive service but residents have not been keen on this approach and OCC are now looking at other options including a possible two hour service running the route Bicester-Oxford incorporating the villages of Wendlebury/Weston on the Green/Kirtlington/Bletchington and Hampton Poyle with a separate service running from Heyford-Bicester.

OCC has the money to deliver the new service but will need to find a new company and drivers interested in delivering the rural route which is currently proving problematic. Timescales are short so a further update will be available shortly.

22.388.9 For Information: Oxfordshire County & Cherwell District Councillor updates (Councillor Simpson /Councillors Patrick)

Councillor Patrick – Cherwell District Council: Councillor Patrick highlighted the following items in his monthly update:

- May 2023 elections – ID will be required in order to vote at next years elections. There will be a communications campaign from CDC to support the announcement.
- Fracking – CDC has declared the Cherwell district a no fracking zone.
- Cherwell Local Plan – the review by Council has been postponed to January 2023 in order that housing figures can be provided.

Councillor Simpson – Oxfordshire County Council: Councillor Simpson highlighted key topics within Oxfordshire County Council including:

- OCC Budget – likely to be a 5% increase
- Oxford city buses – timetables have been slowed up and reliability is now hit or miss
- Oxford bus gates: big polluters are exempt but cars impacted. Major disruption by protestors at last cabinet meeting
- Botley Road to be closed in 2023 to replace the rail bridge
- Zero emission zone generating £120m in revenue
- New OCC Chief Executive hired who previously worked at Coventry City Council
- Oxford United football ground – new proposal to go to cabinet on 24th January 2023 to build opposite Stratfield Brake on a site which is closer to Oxford Parkway station but this also has some limiting factors.

A report will be sent over and circulated to the Council.

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22.388.10 For Information: Works update including village water flows (JM)

JM commented that the willow pollarding for Mr Wilcox will be completed shortly.

JM also had a good meeting with landowner Jim Calcutt and they have put a plan together. He gave permission to dig out the ditches on his land up to the concrete bridge and to ‘v ditch’ into the race, but not touch the race at all. This is a good compromise and it will hopefully allow water to flow at least up to the bridge.

Once at the concrete bridge it would then depend on what work the next land owner Lagan Homes will undertake.

Mr Calcutt stipulated again that no-one from the village is to go near the site of the weir on his land.

22.388.11 For Information: Works update including playground report (RSA)

RSA highlighted that the playground was inspected on 7th December 2022 and the general appearance was reasonable; key points are detailed in the submitted works and playground report.

Bicester Trees are pencilled in to fell the spinney trees on 18th January 2023, reportedly they say it will take a day.

RSA has removed some dangerous wires from the unofficial entrance at the back of the playing field near the green shed and it was highlighted that a plan needs to be developed to repair the fencing.

It was also noted that an HR team of 5 from Nationwide had volunteered to do some community work in the village in 2023 so some key jobs could be lined up to accommodate them.

22.388.12 Resolution To Approve: a spend of up to £700.00 + VAT for the additional edging to North Lane pond to be undertaken by John Miller (RSA)

JM provided a verbal quote to provide an estimated 10 metres length of permeable edging (Nicospan at £40/metre) to aid erosion control and provide a definitive edge to the North Lane pond. It was noted that the exact length required would be decided on site and could therefore be less. This figure included labour and is based on undertaking the project alongside the replacement of the existing rotten wooden posts and capping. The spend requested is an upper spend limit and the project could be completed and invoiced for less.

The resolution to approve a spend of up to £700.00 + VAT for the additional edging to the North Lane pond to be undertaken by John Miller was proposed by DB and seconded by CR. There was one abstention (JM), it was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: JM to progress with the works repairing the North Lane pond edge.

Action: Clerk to provide an update to North Lane pond email group.

22.388.13 For Discussion: Draft Parish Council budget for FY 2023-24 (DB)

The Council discussed the budget lines provided in the draft budget for FY 2023-24 and provided guidance on some lines, particularly surrounding works and maintenance in the village.

DB also highlighted the potential Rural England Community Fund – CDC had invited suggestion for projects in the parish from the Parish Council, community groups and businesses to receive funding from a proposed £500m fund to potentially be received from Central Government. Large scale projects suggested included a pavilion on the playing field and a footpath upgrade to the playing field.

Councillors were advised to inform the clerk of any amendments or additions to the Council budget by the end of the year as the budget for 2023/24 would require approving at the 10th January Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk to amend budget and circulate ahead of proposed approval at January 2023 PC meeting.

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22.388.14 Resolution: To Approve the following invoices for payment (DB)

DB requested approval of the following invoices detailed in the table below.

PC Ref	Payee	Purpose	Total (incl VAT)	Budget Line	Amount Remaining in 2022-23 Budget
305	CPRE	Annual membership renewal	£36.00	Subscriptions/CPRE	£36.00
306	Clerk (J Mullane)	Community vehicle - annual vehicle tax	£265.00	Contingency	£397.86
307	Clerk (J Mullane)	Printer ink (Amazon)	£23.52	Sundries/Office administration costs	£54.46
308	Clerk (J Mullane)	Flowers for planters (Blue Diamond)	£45.55	Village Works/General village maintenance	£426.34
309	SLCC	Membership Annual Renewal 2023	£146.00	Subscriptions/SLCC	£144.00

The resolution to approve the invoices detailed in the table was proposed by DB and seconded by RSA. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to update invoice log with approvals.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for payments from Councillors and ensure payments authorised.

22.388.15 For Discussion: Discuss and agree recommendations from the Planning Group (DB)

Key planning applications on the planning report were discussed by the Council.

Building Applications**Decisions Received – Permitted**

None

Decisions Received – Refused

None

Awaiting Decision**22/02733/F – Milestone Cottage**, 3 North Lane

Single storey ground floor extension and extensive revision of internal space and roof line. Replacement of rear garage with 3 bay structure.

Arboricultural method statement requested

Commented

22/03092/TEL – Shell Layby A34

Application by Openreach to install a fixed broadband communications line. Details are minimal but the line (probably fibre) will be ducted from an existing source on the southbound A34 and will be strung over the access slip road to the services via two 10m light poles.

Commented

22/03133/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane

Resubmission of **22/01292/LB**. Internal remodelling of kitchen and bathroom (ground floor) and retrospective application for installation of EV charge point on the garage wall.

Resubmission includes use of limecrete for the floor substructure as advised and retention of the existing beam.

Commented

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22/03175/F and 22/03176/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane

Resubmission of **22/01291/F**. Erection of a pergola canopy to the side of the garage, including solar panels on part of the canopy. **Commented**

22/03148/F – Old Police House, Northampton Road

Resubmission of permitted development from 2015 (15/01102/F). Erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension following removal of existing conservatory and rear extension. This will provide a large kitchen/family room on the ground floor and two additional bedrooms on the first floor.

In the 2015 application, concerns over the size of the extension (60% increase in floor area from original; recommended is not more than 50%). However, Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 'fallback position' overruled this – hence proposal was approved. **Commented**

22/03149/F – Old Byre, Northampton Road

Erection of a three-bay oak frame open-sided garage with games room above. This is a building of significant scale sited on the property's eastern boundary (backing on to the B430). This will make a significant visual impact from the road. Applicant proposes it will provide some reduction in traffic noise (note shared access with Stutchfield). **Commented**

New Applications**22/03510/DISC – Kemsley Farm**

Discharge of conditions relating to riding surfaces (multi-washed silica sand complex); access tracks (permeable stone); arena fencing (timber to 1.95m height); shed roofs (grey fibre cement with timber boarding to walls). Lighting strategy document tba.

22/03547/F – North View, North Lane

Removal of existing stone lean-to store and part of kitchen wall to rear of property; removal of modern conservatory; rebuild garden store to bring within cottage footprint. Roofline to extensions complex and uses two different roof materials to tiles on main roof. Part of extension roof to cover external turret staircase and window to bring internal to the cottage.

New porch to front of cottage (facing North Lane).

Concerns about loss of original form at rear of cottage: proposed windows are significantly larger than vernacular style retained on 1st floor; roofline incongruous with character form of cottage. Suggest contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2015) policy ESD15; Cherwell Local Plan saved policies (1996) C18, C23 and C28. Comments due by 31/12/2022.

Action: SD to review new applications and comments if required to be circulated to Councillors.

Appeals

None

Tree Works**Permitted:****22/03131/TCA – North View, North Lane**

Works to trees in Conservation Area. Proposal is to reduce the height of a large Yew sited on the western boundary with Peckers Corner. The tree is overbearing in the small garden and overhangs the boundary. Removal of one of two palm trees to add light to the garden. **Commented**

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22/02964/TCA – Weston Manor

Management of 25 trees in Manor grounds: reduce height and remove dead wood from 6 oaks in TPO area (see 22/02918/TPO) at front boundary (near pond); fell and grind 3 sycamore, 1 ash and couple of other tree types. All sycamore and ash recommended for removal. **Commented**

Pending:

22/02918/TPO – Weston Manor

Replacement of old TPO (relevant for 22/02964/TCA) for two areas in Manor grounds near B430 boundary.

22/02993/TCA – Barnacre, Northampton Road

Management of trees in grounds adjacent to Old Byre and Stutchfield.

A significant number of trees to be felled/reduced in height. Site is set back from the B430. There will be a visual impact from the road but there are trees left untouched and remaining trees will recover their structure over next growing year. **Commented**

Action: SD/Clerk to send appropriate planning replies to Cherwell District Council.

22.388.16 For Discussion: Botley West Solar Farm proposal (DB)

The Councillors discussed an overview paper provided by SD along with a topic introduction letter by David Rogers (Horton-cum-Studley resident) on the proposed Botley West solar farm, which would be the fourth largest solar farm in the world. Both documents are linked on the agenda section of the Parish Council website.

SD provided four possible responses to the consultation:

1. Accept that new forms of clean electricity generation are needed and that solar panel arrays are acceptable in the right places.
2. Refuse to accept that sites in the Oxford Green Belt (or any other designated Green Belt) are justifiable based on proximity to high demand communities, or enthusiasm from land owners.
3. Insist that any land used for solar panel installation includes the mandatory regeneration of the land for increased biodiversity and complementary bio-positive uses with proper land management to achieve this.
4. Refuse to accept this development proposal as a National Infrastructure Project which heavily tilts the decision process towards the developer and the examiner at the expense of District and Local Councils and communities.

The Council agreed that the site was situated in the wrong location and were against the sheer size of the development on Green Belt land, however they did appreciate the fact that the land could return to agricultural use fairly quickly if the project finished so the land is not lost forever.

The Council agreed to send a note of concern to our MP – John Howells and also an appropriate reply to Horton-cum-Studley resident, David Rogers who had contacted the Council to highlight the project.

Action: SD to draft a letter of concern to our MP regarding the Botley West solar farm project and a reply to Horton-cum-Studley resident David Rogers.

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- 22.388.17 Resolution: To Approve** the increase in Clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2022-23 and to pay the backdated salary owed from 1st April 2022 (9 months) of £390.00 as a one off payment from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account (DB)

The resolution to approve the increase in Clerks salary on the contracted salary point following the national salary award for local Government services 2022-23 and to pay the backdated salary owed from 1st April 2022 (9 months) of £390.00 as a one off payment from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account was proposed by DB and seconded by CR. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Clerk to initiative request for backdated salary payment from Councillors as part of the invoice payments.

- 22.388.18 Resolution: To Approve** the amendment of the Standing Order for the clerks salary for FY 2022-23 to reflect the amended clerks salary and the associated amendment of the direct debit to Nest pensions in relation to the clerks pension payments from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account, as detailed and discussed by the HR advisory group (DB)

The resolution to approve the amendment of the Standing Order for the clerks salary for FY 2022-23 to reflect the amended clerks salary and the associated amendment of the direct debit to Nest pensions in relation to the clerks pension payments from the 'Parish of Weston on the Green' Barclays Bank account, as detailed and discussed by the HR advisory group was proposed by DB and seconded by JM. The motion was supported unanimously by the Council.

Action: Finance councillors to amend standing order for clerks pay and Nest pension direct debit payment.

- 22.388.19 Resolution To Approve** Parish Council Asset Register (DB)

This item was deferred to the January 2023 Parish Council meeting.

Action: Clerk to place Asset Register approval on January 2023 PC meeting agenda.

- 22.388.20 Next Parish Council Meeting Date:** Tuesday 10th January 2023, 7.30pm (DB)

Meeting Closed: 21.34

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